

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and allowance in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 17 and 19 were rejected under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The Examiner advised that the limitation that the "protrusions extend to a plane of a top planar surface of said taper jig" was unclear. Also, the June 5, 2007 amendment was objected to under 35 USC 132(a) as allegedly introducing new matter into the disclosure. In this regard, again the Examiner asserted that the description that the "protrusions extend to a plane of a top planar surface of said tapered jig" does not appear to be supported by the disclosure as originally filed. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

According to the terminology used in the specification, the protrusions are the tubular elements 32 that extend from the apex of the tapered surfaces 31. As illustrated, for example, in Figures 4, 5, 6 and 7 of this application, the protrusions 32 extend to the plane of the top surface 350 of the tapered jig 3. Thus, the disclosure clearly supports the limitations of claims 17 and 19. Although the disclosure, including the original drawing Figures, supported this feature, it is noted that this characteristic was not literally recited in the written specification. In view of the Examiner's concern, the specification has been amended above to specifically state this disclosed characteristic of the invention. In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 17 and 19 and withdrawal of the objection under 35 USC 132(a) is solicited.

Claims 1-6, 10-12 and 15-22 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Seiji (JP Patent Publication 10-057730). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

In an example embodiment of the invention, two types of through-holes are provided in a tapered jig. This is clear from applicant's specification, for example at page 11, the paragraph beginning at line 16, and from applicant's drawing figures. Indeed, through-holes 33 include both those penetrating from the tip of protrusions 32 and those penetrating from top surface 350. Previously presented claim 1 referred in particular to the through-holes extending from the top planar surface 350 of the tapered jig to another surface of the tapered jig. Claim 18 on the other hand was directed to the through-holes of the protrusions, because claim 18 specified that protrusions defining through-holes extended from apices of at least some of the tapered molding surfaces toward the molding die. Dependent claim 22 further limits claim 18 to the through-holes extending from the top planar surface, so that claim 22 specifies both types of through-holes 33 as mentioned on page 11. Further, claim 1 has been amended above to add the protrusion through-holes recited in claim 18 so that both types of through-holes are recited in claim 1; the through-holes extending from the top surface 350 and the through-holes defined through the protrusions.

It is respectfully submitted that the Seiji publication cited by the Examiner does not teach or in anyway suggest through-holes extending from the top planer surface as recited in claim 1, or the inclusion of protrusions as recited in independent claim 18. In this regard, it can be seen that Seiji provides "heights 10" and through-holes 11 for determining the configuration of the end of the honeycomb structure as shown in Figure 1. However, it is clear that there is no through-hole extending to the top of height 10, which defines the top planer surface of the tapered jig, as required by applicant's claim 1, nor is there any protrusion extending from the apex of the tapered surfaces in Seiji (in the vicinity of holes 11), as required by applicant's claim 18. Thus, the invention of those claims is not anticipated by Seiji. Moreover, because there is no teaching or suggestion of modifying Seiji so as to provide through-holes, and/or protrusions as claimed by applicant, the invention is submitted to be unobvious from Seiji. Indeed, Seiji does not disclose or teach the unique and advantageous

characteristics of the invention made possible by providing through-holes from the top surface and/or protrusions with through-holes as specified.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection over Seiji is requested.

Claims 7-9 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as unpatentable over Seiji in view of Ishihara. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claims 7-9 are submitted to be patentable over Seiji for the reasons advanced above. The Examiner's further reliance on Ishihara does not overcome the deficiencies of Seiji noted above. It is therefore respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable as well.

Claim 14 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as unpatentable over Seiji in view of Itoh. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 14 is submitted to be patentable over Seiji for the reasons advanced above. The Examiner's further reliance on Itoh does not overcome the deficiencies of Seiji noted above. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 14 is also patentable over the prior art of record.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

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Respectfully submitted,

**NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.**

By:



Michelle N. Lester  
Reg. No. 32,331

MNL:slj  
1100 North Glebe Road, 8th Floor  
Arlington, VA 22201-4714  
Telephone: (703) 816-4000  
Facsimile: (703) 816-4100